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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
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SHIPMENTS OF PACKAGE BEES IN 1950

A total of 725,700 pounds of package bees were shipped in 1950 -- 5 percent less than in 1949 and 38 percent below the 1948 shipments, according to the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. Low honey prices in 1949 and 1950 discouraged honey producers and demand for package bees was poor in both years. Queens shipped by package bee producers totaled 720,100 compared with 667,600 in 1949 and 858,800 in 1948.

There were 283,020 packages of bees shipped in 1950, compared with 298,923 in 1949, a decrease of 5 percent. The decrease in package shipments was mostly in the 2-pound packages, which were 15 percent below the 1949 shipments. Of the total pounds of bees shipped in 1950, about 41 percent moved in 2-pound packages, 51 percent in 3-pound, 5 percent in 4-pound and 1 percent in 5-pound packages. Bees shipped in units other than those mentioned above accounted for 2 percent of the total shipments.

Colonies held for production of package bees in 1950 totaled 196,600 about 7 percent fewer than in 1949 and 20 percent below the 1948 number. Some shippers are changing their method of operations so as to produce honey as well as bees. Others, particularly the smaller shippers, are going out of business. An average of 3.7 pounds of bees per colony were shipped in 1950 compared with 3.6 in 1949, 4.7 in 1948, and 5.7 pounds in 1947. Shipments of bees per colony were 5.8 pounds in Mississippi, 4.9 pounds in Alabama, 4.2 pounds in Louisiana, 3.3 pounds in California, 2.6 pounds in Texas and 2.4 pounds in Georgia.

Reports from package bee shippers indicate that they expect 1951 shipments to be about 1 percent smaller than in 1950. Actual shipments in 1950 were about 10 percent above expectations, but 1949 and 1948 shipments were far below the amounts expected because of the slow movement of honey at low prices. In 1947 shipments were 2 percent above the expected and in 1946 they were about the same.

In early February reports from shippers indicated that they had orders for about 29 percent of expected 1951 shipments, compared with 23 percent a year earlier 47 percent in 1949, 64 percent in 1948, and 79 percent in 1947. Advance orders on hand as a percent of expected shipments were 14 percent in Alabama, 15 percent in Georgia, 22 percent in Mississippi, 38 percent in Louisiana and California, and 48 percent in Texas.

Package bee shippers shipped 720,100 queens in 1950 -- 8 percent more than in 1949. All of the six major package bee shipping States shipped more queens than in 1949, except Louisiana where queen shipments were 5 percent less.

The package bee producer continues in a tight squeeze with package prices down, production costs high and express rates up sharply.

PACKAGE BEES - Number of Packages and Total Pounds of Bees Shipped in 1949 and 1950

State	Number of packages - 1950			Other units		Total Pounds	
	2-lb.	3-lb.	4-lb.	5-lb.	Total	1949	1950
Georgia	7,903	15,499	1,673	441	25,516	79,100	71,200
Alabama	33,529	20,254	2,240	644	56,667	145,600	140,000
Mississippi	15,423	14,468	955	286	31,132	59,600	79,500
Louisiana	15,666	29,621	520	25	45,832	136,100	122,400
Texas	13,542	11,065	0	15	24,622	84,600	73,600
California	46,903	22,881	2,684	563	73,031	189,000	176,000
Other States	16,221	9,577	283	139	26,220	73,800	63,000
U.S. (1950)	149,187	123,365	8,355	2,113	283,020	13,246	725,700
U.S. (1949)	175,764	115,003	6,061	2,095	298,923	36,544	767,800

State	Colonies held		Bees shipped		Expected 1951 1/		Advance orders on		Queens shipped	
	Number	in 1950 for production of package bees	per colony	as % of 1950 shipments	Percent	Percent	hand Jan. 15 as percent of expected production	Percent	Number	Number
Georgia	30,000		2.4	102	15				66,300	67,000
Alabama	28,300		4.9	100	14				148,800	179,000
Mississippi	13,800		5.8	103	22				60,800	66,500
Louisiana	29,000		4.2	105	38				134,400	127,700
Texas	28,500		2.6	87	48				74,300	98,000
California	53,000		3.3	98	38				140,000	141,900
Other States	14,000		4.5	90	20				43,000	40,000
United States	196,600		3.7	99					667,600	720,100

1/ As reported by shippers reporting expected shipments.

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